

Joseph E. Petrillo, Chair  
Frances (Fran) Florez, Vice-Chair  
Marc Adelman  
Donna Andrews  
Dr. Ernest A. Bates  
Rod Diridon  
Robert Giroux  
Lynn Schenk  
T.J. (Tom) Stapleton

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER  
GOVERNOR



Mehdi Morshed, Executive Director

## CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, January 27, 2004

### **CONTACT:**

Kris Deutschman  
916-444-5701  
916-425-7174(c)

## **DRAFT PROGRAM EIR/EIS SHOWS HIGH-SPEED TRAINS COULD BE A SMART SOLUTION FOR CALIFORNIA'S GROWING TRANSPORTATION NEEDS**

**San Francisco, CA** Today, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released for public review, a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) prepared for compliance with California Environmental Quality Act and National Environmental Policy Act.

This step comes after a decade of strategic planning and analysis by the Authority, including evaluation of corridor alignment options and the Final Business Plan published in June of 2000. The Final Business Plan found that high-speed rail is an economically viable way to improve the state's transportation network and accommodate the travel needs of 11 million new Californians expected by 2020.

The Draft Program EIR/EIS shows that the proposed high-speed train system could carry up to 68 million passengers by 2020, and would increase mobility, could help relieve highway congestion, help protect California's environment and boost the State's economy.

The comprehensive study describes the potential environmental impacts of three transportation system alternatives and compares how well they would meet California's current and future transportation needs. The alternatives studied are:

- ▶ The "No Project/No Action" alternative, examining the state's current transportation system, including highway and airport improvements planned to be operational by 2020.
- ▶ High-Speed Trains: a proposed new network of electrically powered trains, at least 700 miles long, connecting California's major metropolitan areas and traveling up to 220 miles per hour.
- ▶ The "Modal" alternative, evaluating additional improvements to existing highways and airports which could serve the same travel demand as the proposed high-speed train system.

Based on the analysis, the California High-Speed Rail Authority and the Federal Railroad Administration have identified the high-speed train system as the preferred system alternative to meet California's future intercity travel demand.

*(more)*

"This study demonstrates that a high-speed train network could play a critical role in meeting the environmental, social and economic demands of a growing California," said Authority Chair, Joseph Petrillo.

Study Results in the Draft Program EIR/EIS include:

- ▶ Existing transportation systems do not meet current demand. California is straining to meet the transportation needs of 34 million Californians right now. To meet the transportation needs of 11 million new residents by 2020, substantial and costly highway and airport expansions represented by the Modal alternative (3000 miles of highway, 60 airport gates) would be needed. The bottom line is: current transportation systems can't accommodate the continuing crush of unrelenting growth. But investing in high-speed train infrastructure could well meet much of California's intercity transportation demand for the next generation and beyond for trips between the states major metropolitan areas.
- ▶ High-Speed Trains could boost and help sustain California's economy. For every dollar invested in the high-speed train system, California will reap over \$2 in revenue. In addition to the expected 300,000 job years for construction, the system would be a catalyst for the California economy to produce 450,000 new permanent jobs by 2035. Multi-modal train stations would be economic centers for local communities. Taxpayers would not subsidize operational costs. And the proposed HST system would cost at least two to three times less than expanding highways and airports to meet the same intercity travel demand.
- ▶ Transportation efficiency could be improved across the state. High-speed trains would be integrated with local transit, roads, highways, and airports, offering new choices in city-to-city travel and new choices for underserved populations. They would connect transit terminals to existing airports and ease growing demand on existing highways and airports. Finally, they would offer shorter "door-to-door" travel times.
- ▶ Building for the long-term health of California's environment. High-speed trains would help cut energy use, cut dependence on petroleum, and reduce air pollution. The system would use less land than would be needed for highway and airport expansion, and would have fewer impacts overall on sensitive habitats and wetlands than highway and airport expansion which could serve the same level of intercity travel demand.

Preparation of the Draft Program EIR/EIS involved more than 30 months of data gathering, analysis and evaluation, plus seventeen public scoping meetings, multiple agency consultations and numerous public briefings.

Copies of the Draft Program EIR/EIS can be downloaded from the CHSRA's Web site at **[www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov)**. Copies are also available for public viewing at public libraries throughout the state. A listing of libraries is posted on the Web site. Public hearings on the Draft Program EIR/EIS will be scheduled throughout the state beginning in mid-February. The HSRA Board is expected to finalize the public hearing schedule at its monthly meeting, January 28, 2004, at Fresno City Hall.